CALIFORNIA

Business/Labor/Water Leaders Coalition

PROMOTING INVESTMENT IN CALIFORNIA'S WATER FUTURE





California State Council of Laborers

Legislarive Department



















Santa Clara Valley Water District

San Joaquin River Group

September 22, 1999

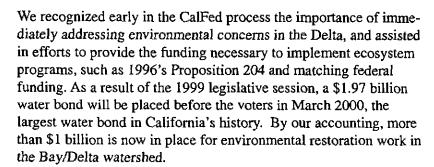
Mr. Lester Snow CalFed Bay-Delta Program 1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1155 Sacramento, CA 95814

SEP 2 2 1999

RE: Draft Programmatic EIS/EIR

Dear Mr. Snow.

We are writing to you to express our concerns regarding CalFed's revised Phase II Report and accompanying Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement/Report for a comprehensive solution to the environmental and water management conflicts in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta which was released June 25, 1999. California's business community and water industry have been strong supporters of consensus-based solutions to these longstanding conflicts and continue to believe balanced, broadly supported solutions best guarantee meeting our future water needs.



However, we believe water supply and water quality issues are just as important, and CalFed itself declared improvements in those areas to be equal objectives of the overall program. Recent events in water supply operations such as the pumping reductions ordered for the benefit of Delta smelt last spring illustrate the vulnerability of the existing system. Yet the draft CalFed documents themselves offer little assurance that even current system deficiencies will be addressed to meet the existing or future needs for economic and population growth.

The near disastrous water shortage that was precipitated by the Delta smelt crisis in June highlighted the need for a renewed commitment by federal regulators to operate to the spirit of the Bay/Delta Accord and make the investments necessary to ensure a reliable water supply. As business leaders, we must have assurances of dependable, high quality water supply, and assurances that CalFed will focus on



Manufacturers Association

















Westlands Water District

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environmental improvements that avoid further taking of land and water.

Without such commitments, the CalFed program cannot succeed, and California's farms and businesses will not be willing to make the necessary economic and infrastructure investments for the future.

The CalFed program must expedite development of the necessary facilities to allow restoration of supplies water users have already dedicated to the environment, and for better management of future water supply, improved levee integrity and environmental conflicts. Unfortunately, the current plan sidesteps nearly every important decision that needs to be made regarding additional facilities. In order for California to regain control of its economic destiny, we must develop those facilities sooner rather than later.

We are also concerned about the program's pace in responding to ever-tougher drinking water quality and public health and safety standards. The Delta provides drinking water to more than 20 million Californians, who have repeatedly shown that they want safe, good quality water. The documents promise long-term improvements but provide no measurable benchmarks to gauge progress during the course of Stage One implementation. Urban water customers can have little confidence that this program will provide them with necessary water quality improvements in a timely manner. Furthermore, urban water suppliers could be forced to invest billions of dollars in costly and unproven new water treatment facilities to meet safe drinking water standards. There may be more cost-effective ways to improve water quality, yet the current program provides no objective decision-making process to fully assess that option.

California is now at a critical juncture. Water quality and water supply needs will only grow during the next decade. The CalFed program must be directed toward an implementation plan that will meet in a timely way both of these needs. We will look to Governor Davis and Secretary Babbitt to return the CALFED program to the correct and balanced course that was promised at its creation. Our common goal is one in which jobs, housing, agriculture, the economy, environmental needs and the needs of California's people can all be met. Thank you.

Sincerely, (signatories)

CC: Davis, Babbitt, California Congressional delegation, State Senate & Assembly

Governor Davis September 22, 1999 Page 3 of 3

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